

THE RETURN OF THE
"CUTTY SARK"

—
C. FOX SMITH

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**THE RETURN OF THE
“ CUTTY SARK ”**

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

A BOOK OF FAMOUS SHIPS

SONGS AND CHANTIES

SAILOR TOWN DAYS

SHIP ALLEY: MORE SAILOR TOWN DAYS

SEA SONGS AND BALLADS

SMALL CRAFT

ROVINGS

SHIPS AND FOLKS

RHYMES OF THE RED ENSIGN



THE " CUTTY SARK " IN MID-OCEAN

THE RETURN OF THE "CUTTY SARK"

BY
C. FOX SMITH

WITH EIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS

SECOND EDITION

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

THE author is indebted to Captain Woodget and to Captain Millett for much of the information contained in the following pages ; also to Mr. Basil Lubbock's " Log of the ' Cutty Sark ' " for data concerning the ship's earlier voyages. Captain Demers, of Ottawa, has supplied some interesting particulars regarding the " Thermopylæ." Several photographs are reproduced by courtesy of the " Daily Mirror." The illustration of the " Cutty Sark " is drawn from Captain Woodget's photograph by Captain Spadaccini.

The poems " What the Old Man Said " and " The ' Cutty ' Comes Back " are reprinted by permission respectively of " Punch " and the " White Star Magazine." Acknowledgment is also due to the " Blue Peter " as regards Chapter Seven.

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NOTE.—The picture of the "Cutty Sark" in Surrey Docks shows her as barque-rigged. She was of course barquentine-rigged at that time: but the drawing was not intended as an actual portrait of the ship, and the artist gave her the yards on the main for the sake of artistic effect.

THE RETURN OF THE "CUTTY SARK"

INTRODUCTORY. THE BUILDING OF THE SHIP

"A HUNDRED years is a very long time"—so runs the first line of the old sailor shanty. And even half a hundred years is a long enough time to witness a good many changes.

Fifty-five years ago—when Bismarek was still plotting against France, and the fair Montijo still queened it at Versailles, and Gladstone was just about forming his first administration—when women still wore crinolines and chignons, and tea was round about five shillings a pound, and the Suez Canal not yet open—fifty-five years ago, then, in days which seem to times like these almost as strange and remote as those of Tutankhamen, there was launched at Dumbarton a ship (small as we count ships nowadays) which was destined to have a career as notable as ever a ship had before or since, and one, moreover, of which neither her builders nor her first owner ever dreamed.

In the old fairy-tale days, as every one knows, it was usual when a princess was christened for fairies to attend at the ceremony, of whom some brought gifts of a wholly desirable nature, leaving it (with a remarkable lack of prevision) to the last comer, a cantankerous and ironical lady, to endow the infant with some quality which should entirely nullify the kindly intentions of her more amiable sponsors.

One imagines some such bestowal of gifts good and bad at the christening of the new ship; one sponsor saying, "She shall have long life," another, "She shall have beauty above her peers," a third, "She shall be loved of many"—while the last dropped the gall into the cup with the words, "She shall outlive her own generation."

Those were very different times from ours; and in no department

of life was the difference more pronounced than in the world of ships and shipping. The shipowner of those days took a keen personal interest in his ships. Often an old shipmaster himself, he personally supervised every detail of design and construction, and often had suggestions and alterations to make of his own, in consultation with the chosen captain who was to command a new ship.

Captain John Willis, for whom the "Cutty Sark" was built, was a typical example of the retired shipmaster-owner. He always had a great deal to say in the design of his ships, and the plans of the "Cutty" were altered more than once in accordance with certain pet ideas of his own.

Most of the Victorian shipowners stuck fairly faithfully to one or two firms, if they did not, as very often was the case, build their own ships. Thus Hood, of Aberdeen, built practically all the ships of the Aberdeen White Star Line; Barclay, Curle, of Glasgow, most of the "Lochs" of that city; Laing, of Sunderland, most of Duncan Dunbar's ships which were not built over in Moulmein; and Pile, also of Sunderland, several ships for Green, of Blackwall.

Old John Willis, on the other hand, was rather given to experiments, and in this instance the experiment, though a daring one, turned out eminently successful, so far, at least, as his own interests were concerned.

The contract for his new ship went to a quite new and practically unknown firm, that of Scott and Linton, of Dumbarton. The life of the firm was a brief one, and the "Cutty Sark" was its swan-song. Scott and Linton were like those poets whose immortality is assured by a single song, painters who live in a single picture.

They built some half a dozen ships besides the "Cutty Sark"; none other of any size or note. Naturally they were highly delighted at securing so important a contract, and the probability is that they cut things as fine as they could to get it. And no doubt old John Willis, hard old man of business as he was, drove a good bargain with the new firm; so good that some people say the "Cutty Sark" broke them. The captain who watched the building of the ship on his owner's behalf insisted on so high a standard as regards the timber used that the margin of profit (probably not very large to begin with) was cut away altogether. At any rate, whatever the reason, Scott and Linton failed before the ship

was finished, and Messrs. Denny Bros., also of Dumbarton, completed her.

The "Cutty Sark's" designer was the late Hercules Linton, a member of the firm. He had been reared in the clipper tradition, for he had learned his craft in the famous yard of Hall, of Aberdeen, the builders of the two little clippers "Stornoway" and "Chrysolite," which were the first British-built ships to offer a serious challenge to the supremacy of the Americans in the China trade, the "Flying Spur" and "Yangtze," and, later, of such magnificent iron ships as the "Port Jackson" and "Torridon."

Even at the risk of repeating an oft-told tale, one cannot give an account of the building of the "Cutty Sark" without brief reference to what may be termed her pedigree. Her immediate forerunner was, of course, that wonderful old ship, "The Tweed," of which the late Mr. Joseph Conrad wrote in "The Mirror of the Sea" that she was "heavy to look at but of phenomenal speed. In the middle sixties she had beaten by a day and a half the steam mail-boat from Hong-Kong to Singapore. There was something peculiarly lucky, perhaps, in the placing of her masts—who knows? . . . Perhaps there had been a touch of genius or the finger of good fortune in the fashioning of her lines at bow and stern. It is impossible to say."

She was originally the "Punjaub," a paddle-wheel frigate built in Bombay for the Indian Marine, and it is said that the lines of her hull were modelled on those of a French prize. As the "Punjaub" she had a stirring and distinguished career, and when she was still a comparatively new ship John Willis bought her and took out her engines, and renamed her "The Tweed." The Willis family hailed from Berwick, hence the love for Border names which shows itself in the names of so many of their ships—"Coldstream," "Coldinghame," "Lammermuir."

She was one of many steamships which were as good or better under sail. In Willis's fleet she made some astonishing passages, and when the "Cutty Sark" was built he was anxious to introduce into her lines certain features of "The Tweed," notably the latter's bow. The "Cutty" may, in fact, be described as an improved "The Tweed," the improvement being especially marked in point of looks, for the latter ship, by all accounts, was by no means handsome.

The "Cutty Sark" is, of course, what is known as a composite ship. This phase of shipbuilding, though it lasted little more than a dozen years, produced some of the fastest, finest, and most durable vessels of the days of sail. It marked the transition from wood to iron, and one of the first firms to take it up with success was that of Bilbe and Perry, of Rotherhithe, whose "Red Riding Hood" was one of several ships built by them for Anderson, Anderson and Company, the London ship-owners. Among other well-known composite ships may be mentioned the "Thermopylæ," always looked upon as the "Cutty Sark's" great rival; the famous "Taeping," "Ariel's" runner-up in the historic tea race of 1868; "Ariel" herself, "Sir Lancelot," "Sobraon," "City of Adelaide," "Beltana," "Torrens," "Thyatira," and "Centurion"; one and all ships which combined speed and staunchness in a remarkable degree.

The "Cutty" was built of teak throughout, with iron beams, and she had a teak deck. This was, no doubt, admirably suited to the weather conditions in the China Sea, since the natural oil in which teak abounds renders it impervious to weather and far less prone to warp and crack with extreme heat than English and American woods. But it was far from being a sailor's delight in some respects. Teak gets abominably slippery when it is wet. I remember a sailorman telling me of a big Liverpool ship in which he served his time, which had a few teak planks amidships, I suppose to give greater rigidity. If anyone stepped from the pine on to the teak without noticing the change, he very soon did notice it, for his feet would shoot from under him as if he had walked on a skating-rink.

Her spar plan was much squarer than that of most of the clipper ships of the period, her main royal yard measuring 38 feet as against "Norman Court's" 32 and "Ariel's" 35. Her mainmast from deck to truck was nearly 150 feet, and with stunsails spread, extending on each side so as practically to double the width of her sails, she was a veritable cloud of canvas.

She was painted black with a gold line level with the main deck, and lots of decoration about her stern and figurehead. Her lower masts were white, yards and upper masts black, and her boats were originally black also, though in Captain Woodget's time white was substituted



" CUTTY SARK " (1924)

in the latter respect. A bright brass rail ran all round her bulwarks, as in most of the tea clippers.

After her re-rigging and re-conditioning she looks very much as she must have done when she was first launched, though at close quarters she shows, it is hardly necessary to say, signs of wear and tear after over half a century afloat, in addition to certain other minor points of difference.

Her original cabin plan has been considerably altered. There was originally no companion, as at present, close to the wheel. The captain's room and bathroom occupied the whole of the after end of the poop, and the only entrance to it was through the saloon, which was reached by a companion at the forward end of the poop, where there is a porch with a door at each side. The pantry and the mate's room, on the left-hand side of the alleyway leading from the saloon, are unaltered; but on the right-hand side two cabins have been knocked into one since the Portuguese bought her and converted into the captain's cabin. The big teak bed which is in this room is not, as many people think, a part of the old furniture, but was also put in by the Portuguese.

The saloon is panelled in the bird's-eye maple so dear to the shipbuilder of the seventies, and the sideboard, the fireplace, and the brass lamp over the table have all, I believe, been in the ship all her life.

The donkey boiler on the top of the midshiphouse is another Portuguese innovation. The boats were originally carried on skids on the top of the half-deck (where the apprentices berthed) abaft the mainmast, and the places where the davits were fitted are still to be seen on the rail close by the break of the poop. In her China trade days she had a forecastle with bunks for thirty seamen between-decks, and the portholes which lighted it are there still, though they have been stopped up.

On the poop are to be seen the old teak and brass-hooped "harness casks" in which so much "salt horse" has been stored in days gone by, and the original hen-coops are also still *in situ*. By the way, does anyone know the real derivation of the term "harness cask"? Is it a playful reference to the previous occupation of its contents?

The wheel is, of course, that which has been there from the beginning, with possibly a few new spokes, and opposite to it is the bell

with the ship's name and the date—"1870." And thereby hangs a tale.

When the "Cutty" was in Table Bay during the war, the captain of a steamer lying beside her—he had, I think, been an apprentice in her at one time—conceived an irresistible desire to possess himself of a souvenir of the old ship, and above all of the bell. I don't know if he ever attempted to gratify his desire in the orthodox way. He may have done so, without success, as more than one person did to my knowledge.

However that may be, like a good many collectors, he allowed his acquisitive yearnings to get the better of his scruples and his caution, and gave a couple of his quartermasters ten shillings apiece to get on board the "Cutty" (or "Ferreira," as of course she then was) and carry off her bell!

Imagine his feelings when that same evening a message was brought to him in his cabin that the police wanted to see him!

What it is to have a guilty conscience! Down went that captain's heart into his boots. He knew what it was all about. The stupid asses had let themselves get nabbed, and then rounded on him! However, there was nothing for it but to put the best face he could upon it, so out he went to interview the messenger of outraged justice, looking as innocent as he could.

"Sorry to trouble you, captain," quoth the sergeant, "but two of your men have been on the bust up-town and got locked up."

Ultimately, however, the nefarious scheme was carried into effect. I'm not sure if it was the same miscreant who actually pulled it off in the end! And the "Cutty," finding herself without a bell, put matters straight by the simple process of annexing that of her neighbour, the "Shakespeare." What the "Shakespeare" did history records not. For all I know, people may be still—awe-inspiring thought!—stealing ships' bells in remote corners of the world and imperilling their souls and their reputations in consequence of that first lawless annexation.

When the "Cutty" returned to British ownership, her bell was tracked down and its unrighteous owner persuaded to disgorge. But whether the "Shakespeare"—if she is still afloat—ever came by her own I cannot say.

She was launched on the 23rd November, 1869, the future captain's young bride, Mrs. Moodie, performing the christening ceremony.

The name of "Cutty Sark" has been the subject of a good deal of puzzlement in its time, and once, when Captain John Willis was entertaining a party on board, a mischievous young lady who was among the guests caused that modest bachelor much discomfiture by her persistent inquiries: "But, Captain Willis, what *does* 'Cutty Sark' mean? What a *funny* name!"

But there are probably few people now who do not know both the meaning and the origin of the funny name. "Cutty" is, of course, Scotch for "short"—though in point of fact it is not exclusively Scotch. In the combination "cutty pipe" it is, I suppose, Irish, while I have heard a wren called a "cutty wren" in the South of England.

A "cutty sark," then, is a short shirt; and *the* "cutty sark" was the garment sported by that somewhat disreputable damsel Nannie on the occasion when Tam o' Shanter spied upon the witches' Hallowe'en revels. It must be admitted that there is nothing strikingly "cutty" about Nannie's draperies as they are depicted on the ship's figurehead. They are, on the contrary, somewhat full and flowing, and for decorum Nannie would put many a twentieth-century flapper to the blush.

Another couple of months saw the new clipper ready for sea. She sailed from London on the 15th February, 1870, with general cargo for China, and on the 16th February took from the Start the first of her many departures.

BY THE OLD PAGODA ANCHORAGE

By the old Pagoda Anchorage they lay full fifteen strong,
And their spars were like a forest, and their names were like a song.
"Fiery Cross" and "Falcon" there
Lay with "Spindrift," doomed and fair,
And "Sir Lancelot" of a hundred famous fights with wind and wave,
"Belted Will" and "Hallowe'en"
With "Leander" there were seen,
And "Ariel" and "Titania" and "Robin Hood" the brave . . .
"Thyatira" of the lovely name and proud "Thermopylæ,"
By the old Pagoda Anchorage when clippers sailed the sea—
Racing home to London River—
Carry on for London River—
Crack her on for London River with her chests of China tea!

By the old Pagoda Anchorage (it's many a year ago!)
A sight it was to see them with their decks like drifted snow,
And their brasses winking bright,
And the gleaming gold and white
Of the carven kings and maidens on each slim and soaring bow,
And the high and slender spars
Humming shanties to the stars,
And the hulls whose speed and staunchness are a dead man's secret now,—
The ships so brave and beautiful that never more shall be,
By the old Pagoda Anchorage when clippers sailed the sea—
Racing home to London River—
Crack her on for London River—
Carry on for London River with her chests of China tea!

CHAPTER ONE

HER first passage was not a specially fortunate one. She was by no means lucky in her weather, and the little accidents which are inevitable in a new ship before she has "found herself" were rather more numerous than usual. Probably ironwork in ships was at that time still in its experimental stages.

Captain Moodie's log, with its many impatient references to the waywardness of the weather, displays the not unnatural irritability of a man particularly anxious to show off his new ship's paces.

Her two best days' work during the passage were on the 14th and 15th April, when she covered by log 360 and 343 miles respectively, though on the latter day the distance by observation was 269 miles. Captain Moodie notes in his log that during the two days the ship lost 76 miles by current. This point is worth bearing in mind, since very often it may account for apparent divergences between the speed of a ship as shown by her log and the distance she has covered by reckoning and observation. It also demonstrates the great difficulty of coming to an absolute conclusion as to a ship's speed, and the impossibility of setting down a big run as a fairy-tale solely on account of some such seeming discrepancy.

Things were already beginning to look rather blue for the tea clippers. Indeed, one would be inclined to give Captain Willis credit for a good deal of foresight when he gave the "Cutty Sark" a stern very much heavier than that of the usual tea-clipper model. This point was carried out by the builders in especial deference to his strongly expressed wishes. He hated to have ships pooped. Perhaps his own experience at sea had given him a "scunner" at the idea.

The "Cutty"—like the "Thermopylæ"—was the object of much criticism, both favourable and otherwise, on her arrival in China. "I

was on board of her in China," says one writer, "at the end of her maiden run, and, the same as a good many there, did not know whether I quite liked her or not. However, we were all bad prophets, and little suspected that she would outlast the splendid fleet of clippers which came East in those days." No doubt the new ship's powerful stern was one of the points over which the wiseacres shook their heads. Such ships as "Ariel" and "Sir Lancelot" were fine to a fault aft, and the "Cutty" would look all the heavier by contrast.

She loaded her first cargo of tea at Shanghai, the freight paid being £3 10s. per 50 cubic feet. The only other ship to get such a high charter was the famous "Serica," which was runner-up in the classic race of 1868.

The loading of a cargo of tea was a matter which called for very special care and skill. It was all done by Chinamen, and the chests, or "catty boxes," as they were called, which varied in size according to the port of loading, were fitted into their places so closely that the interior of the hold resembled a vast Chinese puzzle. Everything was made as neat as a new pin to receive this valuable cargo. After the outward cargo was discharged, the lower holds and 'tween-decks were thoroughly cleaned and fumigated—a stiff job when, as generally happened in the case of the ships which came by way of Australia, the last cargo had consisted of coal. They were then lined with bamboo matting, and the ship was ready to take in her tea. When the tea trade was at its height the catty boxes were stowed in every conceivable corner, even under the bunks and the cabin table; whatever was carried in the poop being the captain's own private venture, since that part of the ship is as much the skipper's special domain as the chancel of a church is the parson's.

The "Cutty" sailed from Shanghai on the 26th June, to the usual accompaniment of cheering and gunfire and the striking of ships' bells. She was the first ship to leave that season. She made a rather poor passage (37 days) to Anjer. Mr. Basil Lubbock criticizes Captain Moodie's judgment in his choice of a course down the China Sea. But he was a clever and experienced navigator, if a somewhat cautious one. His log shows that he was tremendously keen on showing the "Cutty's" paces and making a good passage, so there must have been some fairly solid

reason for the course he took. It should be borne in mind, for one thing, that he and his ship had not been very long acquainted, and quite possibly he felt that it was unwise to take extreme risks until he knew her better.

Again, his passage was made during the unfavourable monsoon season. The difficulties of navigating the China seas, never small, are intensified a hundredfold at that time of the year. Moreover, the "Cutty" was never at her best in light airs, and in that respect she differed from nearly all the crack vessels in the tea trade. The "Thermopylæ," which was a ship specially noted for her "ghosting" qualities, always made very good passages to Anjer. It may have been the knowledge of this fact—namely, the difficulty of keeping the "Cutty" steering in very light airs—which made Captain Moodie avoid the shorter route by Gaspar Strait, with the possibilities it held of his ship getting hung up in a calm under the lee of the land.

She rounded the Cape 26 days from Anjer, in 4 days (between the 7th and 11th August) running 1,250 miles. Captain Moodie again remarks in his journal on the perverseness of the current, noting that while the patent log showed the ship to be making 14 to 15½ knots, the distance by observation worked out at an average of only about 13. The south-east trades were poor and the north-east little better. She only kept them 4 days, reaching Beachy Head on the 12th October, a 109 days pilot to pilot.

Early in the passage there was a pretty considerable mortality among her stunsail booms as well as among upper masts and yards, and she had not been very long out from Shanghai before the entry occurs in the log—"very few spars left."

So far the "Cutty" had not had the best of luck. But her next passage to China was to give her a chance to show herself off in good earnest.

She passed through the Downs at three in the morning of the 10th November, was off Dungeness at six, Beachy Head at nine, Owers Light at midday, and took her departure from the Start at nine o'clock the same evening. She made her southing piling sail on sail, and was up with the Line in 19 days.

Captain Moodie sent up his royal yards 4 days out, his main skysail,

topgallant and royal stunsail booms 2 days later. Just before reaching the Ombay Passage, two ships were sighted, which proved to be the "Taeping" and "Titania," the first-named having left London 17 days before the "Cutty," which took her loading berth, the latter a fortnight ahead. The three ships were in company in the China seas for several days, and Captains Moodie and Dowdy (of the "Titania") exchanged visits.

She arrived in the Shanghai River 98 days from the Start, an excellent passage during which she had kept going steadily all the time, though without making any very sensational runs. Her best was 326 miles in 42° 16' south latitude under all plain sail.

Mr. William James Cock, who joined her for this voyage as chief officer, thus describes the routine on board a tea clipper:

"We were kept hard at it all the time, either making sail or taking it in. It was four hours on and four hours off throughout the passage, and in heavy squalls all hands were called up, so that their rest was broken frequently, whilst in fine weather there was the mending and washing of clothes to be seen to in spare time. There was little time for recreation or for thinking of anything but work. The strain, too, was pretty great, especially in foul weather, for if anything carried away you had to know what to do in a moment. There was no sickness on board, and though the sailors were ill paid in those days, they were well fed. Whether they ever had time to go ashore or not in the East I hardly remember. I don't think I did. It was hard work all the time. At sea you were racing against everything, and in harbour you were either discharging or taking in cargo."

London ships, it may be mentioned, had a very much better name as regarded food than either Glasgow or Liverpool vessels.

After her arrival in China, the "Cutty Sark" put in the time until the season's tea came down to the ports in coasting cruises, visiting Bangkok, where she loaded rice for Hong-Kong, thence going to Foochow for a cargo of poles for Shanghai.

The rates for sailing vessels, owing to the competition of the steamers, were now going down rapidly, £3 a ton being the highest freight now offered, as against £7 in the middle sixties. And even at these low rates cargoes were hard to get. There is to my thinking a great pathos about the ousting of the queens of sail from their own special realm by the

despised "steam kettle." They had been accustomed to be so proud, so sought after, so gracious in their condescension. If they were subject to the guiding hand of man, it was in no spirit of slavery. They were the thoroughbreds of the sea, never its beasts of burden. And now something was wrong, something new, strange, not to be comprehended; and one fancies them waiting impatiently at their moorings with a touch of puzzled anxiety.

The "Cutty" waited at Shanghai a couple of months in the hope of getting a better charter, but none came along, and at last she was compelled to make the best of a bad job and accept the original offer of a cargo at £3 a ton.

She sailed on the 4th September, 1871, one of the last of the dwindling clipper fleet to leave China that year. She left Shanghai just at the end of the N.E. monsoon, and consequently again made a poor passage to Anjer. These China Sea passages were her weakest point throughout her time in the tea trade. Six days from Anjer, on the 12th October, she made a run in the south-east trades of 322 miles in 24 hours, and during heavy weather off the Cape she had, for her, the unusual experience of shipping a sea over the poop.

She anchored off the North Foreland at 6 p.m. on the 20th December, 107 days out, the "Ariel," which (handicapped by a new skipper) had left Shanghai the same day, arriving a week later. Her passage was the third best of the year, being surpassed by "Titania's" of 93 days and "Thermopylæ's" of 106.

CHAPTER TWO

“CUTTY SARK’S” 1872 passage from China was notable as being the only occasion when circumstances permitted her actually to race with the “Thermopylæ.” It has been my endeavour in telling the “Cutty’s” story to avoid as far as possible all the tempting digressions and side issues that arise out of it; but it is next to impossible to write about her without some allusion to the “Thermopylæ.” The reputations and the performances of the two ships are so inextricably interwoven that you can no more speak of the one without the other than you can speak of Damon without Pythias, of Castor without Pollux, of David without Jonathan, of Roland without Oliver, or of mustard without cress.

The “Thermopylæ” was a singularly beautiful ship—a thoroughbred and a clipper right through. She was nearly as sharp as the “Cutty,” and, like her, she was a more powerful vessel than most of those in the China tea trade. She seems on the whole to have been the better-looking of the two. The much-discussed question of their rivalry as regards speed will never be really settled, for the simple reason that, as will be seen, the result of the only out-and-out race they ever had was not decisive. The “Cutty” was, as a matter of fact, specially built with a view to lowering the Aberdeen ship’s colours, and feeling was always inclined to run high between the captains of the two ships. Captain Kemball seems to have had a tendency to take up a somewhat high-and-mighty attitude about his ship, and after the 1872 race he declined rather haughtily to produce the “Thermopylæ’s” log up to the date when the “Cutty” lost her rudder. And later, when the rivals were in the Australian trade, Captain Jenkins followed that not very fortunate precedent.

This keen rivalry is perhaps not easy to understand nowadays. But then it was by no means surprising. There was tremendous jealousy

between the ships of different lines and between ships hailing from different ports. The "Thermopylæ" was an Aberdeen ship, the "Cutty" a London ship, though she was built in Scotland and owned and skippered, for her first few voyages, by Scotsmen.

To carry off the blue riband of the China tea trade was the great ambition of many a shipowner during the mid-nineteenth century. It was desired as to win the Derby is desired by racehorse owners. It was the Grand National, the King's Prize, the Waterloo, of the shipping world. And that not entirely on account of the material benefits, and they were considerable, which it entailed. A ship well known as a passage-maker commanded the highest freight rates from China, and the captain of the first ship to reach London with the new tea generally got a handsome bonus as a reward.

But there was, I think, something more in it than that. Hard, practical business men though they were (and one stands sometimes amazed by their appalling meanness!), somewhere or other these level-headed old Victorian shipowners had a touch of imagination, of vision which raised their business above mere shillings and pence. It is told of one of them that he went out of his mind after the wreck of his favourite ship. I can well believe it; and I also believe, though it requires more faith to do so, that it was not because she was uninsured he did so.

There is a story—I admit that it has an apocryphal ring about it—that when the "Thermopylæ" took her pilot off Beachy Head at the end of her wonderful maiden voyage, Captain Kemball, indicating the ship's rail, said to the pilot:

"Do you see that?"

"Yes," replied the pilot, not a little surprised.

"So do I," replied Captain Kemball, "for the first time since leaving China!"

Such yarns as this are the straws which show the way the wind blows; and this one would seem to suggest that the "Thermopylæ" was not, to put it mildly, exactly a dry ship. Although she was not so fine aft as such vessels as "Ariel" and "Sir Lancelot," she was rather prone to scooping the seas over her quarter, especially when she was loaded at all deep, and (says Captain Demers, Dominion Wreck Commissioner at

Ottawa, who knew the ship well) "those in the way would find themselves groping their way clear of danger, having been swept from poop to main hatch."

There was a legend current among old shellbacks that she had a habit of losing men overboard when nobody was looking, and that she had disposed of sixty-five men in this way during the first twenty years of her life. Whether there is anything in the yarn or not I cannot say. Sailors' gossip in such matters is as unreliable as it is picturesque. "God knows," says Captain Demers in mentioning the story, "we had enough weather when I was in her to sweep the twenty-seven of us off, but there was never a casualty greater than a cut finger!"

There can be no doubt that the "Thermopylæ" was a wonderful ship to windward and in light airs. She seemed to have the gift of keeping moving, almost uncannily, in what to most ships would be tantamount to a dead calm. Once, in the chops of the Channel, she had been fogbound for several hours, and when the fog lifted she was surrounded by ships of all kinds, sail and steam, some close at hand, others mere specks on the horizon. Then a breeze sprang up, light but steady, and by four in the afternoon all were out of sight astern.

In strong winds and easting weather her performances were equally notable. Captain Demers says, "Many times, heaving the log with main topgallantsail set, the last knot on the line passed over the taffrail before the sandglass had ceased to run"; and on another occasion he recalls that she "logged thirteen knots when braced sharp up on the starboard tack, the main royal just lifting."

He also described how when running down the easting she once covered (by observation) 360 miles in 24 hours. The sea was high, with a strong quartering wind, which fell away entirely at 8 a.m. Had the wind held, the run might have been a record.

Captain Demers never remembers the "Thermopylæ" being sufficiently becalmed to lose steerage-way.

The Aberdeen White Star Line sold her to Mr. Reford, of Montreal, and she was again sold, this time to Portugal, the year before the "Cutty," having ceased to be a paying proposition to her Canadian owners. The Portuguese kept her for some years as a training ship, and in 1906 she was taken out to sea and sunk by gunfire, whether for sentimental or

practical reasons is not quite clear. Perhaps there was a bit of both in it.

Yes, she was a fair and a fine ship, and all the discussions and the wranglings about her speed and that of the "Cutty" seem just a trifle childish after the common misfortune of oblivion has overtaken all the fair queens of the sea alike. It is like quarrelling about social precedence after the Day of Judgment. If there be any watery star—and I hope there is—where the ghosts of ships may find a happy haven, surely those bygone rivalries will be all forgotten . . . unless, indeed, old ships are like old sailors, in which case they will no doubt wrangle and argue among themselves from morning to night, and enjoy it heartily too! I don't think any man ever more displayed the landsman's lack of knowledge of, and sympathy with, sailor nature than whoever was responsible—I'm not sure it wasn't Mr. Gladstone—for turning the Greenwich pensioners into out-pensioners because they quarrelled so among themselves. Why, of course they did—and it was the breath of life to them, not a doubt of it! I dare say they died off by dozens when their quarrelling was put an end to.

The two ships crossed the bar at the mouth of the Shanghai on the same day, but they were held up for three days by fog. To Anjer they were neck and neck, first one, then the other, holding the lead, and the run down the China Sea occupied 28 days. As usual, Captain Moodie gave the Cochin China coast a wide berth, and although, as Mr. Basil Lubbock observes, Captain Keay (of the "Ariel") and other crack clipper ship captains might have adopted a different course, the question still remains, "Would they have done so in the 'Cutty Sark'?"

South of Keeling Island a strong trade wind came out of the E.S.E. This was the sort of weather the "Cutty" loved, and she began to reel the knots off merrily. For about a fortnight these conditions prevailed, and at the end of that time the "Cutty" was 400 miles ahead of her rival. On the 7th August the wind failed, and after a couple of days of baffling weather and variable airs a gale with heavy sea came out of the west. The "Cutty" had a rough time of it, losing her fore and main upper topsails. Sails, and even spars, can be replaced with comparative ease. But Fate had a far worse blow in store for her. On the last day of the gale, by way of a parting shot, a heavy sea

tore her rudder loose, and it vanished into the deeps of the Indian Ocean.

There could be no more complete disablement. To most captains it would have meant dropping out of the race altogether. A similar disaster once befell the American packet ship "Dreadnought"; but in her case the skipper had been disabled and the carpenter killed, and there was no one else on board capable of dealing with the situation.

I don't know if Captain Moodie was ever in the habit of indulging in unparliamentary language about the lack of wind. If so, he was certainly getting enough of it now, and as he was in the special realm sacred by nautical tradition to the Flying Dutchman, he may have wondered if he were doomed to share the fate of that fabled indulger in strong language, and drift for ever off the Cape of Storms in a clipper ship without a rudder.

But Captain Moodie was no Vanderdecken. He immediately set about devising a means of checkmating the trick Fortune had played him.

A jury rudder was constructed out of a spare spar, and next came the ticklish process of getting it into position and securing it to the ship, a task rendered far more difficult by the heavy sea which was still running as a legacy of the gale. The rudder was secured by means of guys leading into the after mooring-pipe, the lower of these guys being fitted with a bridle leading under the ship's keel so as to prevent the rudder from rising. The whole thing was lowered over the stern with a kedge anchor to sink it, and the head of the jury sternpost brought up through the "trunk" (or opening) through which the sternpost and steering gear passed. The opening was not large enough to permit of the passage of the latter as well as the improvised sternpost, so the steering gear was then made fast to the back of the rudder and to a spar placed across the ship, the chains being led thence to the wheel, thus keeping the chains from fouling the ship's counter.

It is interesting to note that Captain Moodie found a small model of the ship which happened to be on board extremely useful in calculating the measurements for the rudder. I wonder where that old model—a builder's half-model, probably—is now. Curiously enough, I have never seen a decent model of the "Cutty." The only one of any sort

I have ever come across was an absurd clumsy affair, hopelessly out of proportion, with a little flag bearing the strange device, "Cuttysark" !

At last the jury rudder was successfully fixed, and the "Cutty" proceeded, though carefully, on her way.

The rudder held out all right for some time and served its purpose well with the wind aft, but the ship steered very badly on a bowline, so that she had to be kept under pretty short canvas ; but the accident had served to spoil the "Cutty's" passage. For four days she was hove-to while the new rudder was being made, and in strong gales—the breath of life to the little ship under ordinary conditions—she had several times to be hove-to in order to prevent Captain Moodie's precious gadget from carrying away. As it was, one by one the eyebolts and stanchions which secured the rudder parted, and in the doldrums the whole contraption had to be got inboard and overhauled. This time it held out the rest of the way home, and the "Cutty" arrived in the London River 119 days from her pilot.

Her supporters claimed that but for the loss of her rudder she would have completed the passage at least a fortnight sooner than she did, and thus beaten the "Thermopylæ" by a week.

It was one of those debatable finishes to a sporting event which always leaves a good deal of bad blood behind it. There was a rare wrangle after it was all over between the respective owners and skippers of the two ships, and Captain Kemball made the great mistake of refusing to produce his logbook when Captain John Willis challenged him to do so. But so far as the "Cutty Sark" was concerned, this business of the jury rudder is to my mind even more memorable than a fast passage.

CHAPTER THREE

CAPTAIN MOODIE left the "Cutty Sark" after her race with the "Thermopylæ," and went into steam. His successor was Captain F. W. Moore, who had worked his way from bos'n to skipper in Willis's ships, his last berth being in the "Blackadder," like "Hallowe'en," an iron "Cutty Sark"—whose many mishaps are something of a sea tradition.

This time the "Cutty" went out to Australia for the first time. Leaving the Start on the 2nd December, 1872, she arrived off Melbourne on the 11th February, 69 days out. She then went on to Newcastle, and, also for the first time, suffered the indignity of a coal-cargo. On the way over to China she weathered a typhoon without damage.

She left Shanghai on the 9th July, in very heavy weather, and ran into another typhoon off the Formosa coast, passing through this also without sustaining any harm. The other principal incident of the homeward passage was the passing of the P.S.N. Co.'s mail-boat "Garonne" off the Cape Verde Islands. It was not a good year for passage-makers, owing to the weather in the China seas, and the "Cutty's" 117 days was as good as most.

After this voyage she changed her captain for the second time. Her new commander, Captain Tiptaft, was a Borderer like the "Cutty's" owner. He had not been accustomed to crack ships; in fact, he was rather of the cautious type of skipper. Nevertheless, in his time the ship made some of the biggest runs of her whole career.

Her first passage under Tiptaft was 79 days to Sydney.

It was a year of light winds both in the Tropics and in the Forties, and Captain Tiptaft, who was no lover of the high latitudes, did not go far south to look for a wind. He might not have found one if he

had done, for the "Thermopylæ," which ran down the easting south of Forty-five, had light winds all the way out.

This time the "Cutty" loaded her coal in Sydney for Shanghai. She made a poor passage across to China—somehow she never seemed to like coal!—and loaded at Hankow at £5 4s. a ton. She left on the 24th June, nearly a month before any other clipper, and, taking it quite easy and comfortable, reached London in 118 days with the first teas of the season.

Her next passage to Sydney was a very fine one—79 days—in spite of bad weather in the Channel, during which she lost a man overboard (I believe her first casualty), the poor trades and usual contrary winds and currents going up the Australian coast.

She loaded again at Hankow, leaving well ahead of the rest of the fleet, and had an uneventful passage of 122 days.

The outward passage of 1875 was one of the notable ones of her career. Captain Watson, of the s.s. "Vistula," who was in the ship at the time, states that on this passage they were 50 miles due south of Melbourne 54 days out, but being bound for Sydney and meeting strong head-winds, the ship was put about and went round the south of Tasmania. "We crossed the Equator," he says, "in 16 days" (his memory has played him false here, as she was 21 days from the Lizard to the Line), "and running the easting down did 2,163 miles in 6 days, an average of 15 knots, at times doing over 17 knots. We were south of Melbourne in 54 days. I never saw anything pass her during the whole time, steam or sail." Had the "Cutty" been bound to Melbourne, she would undoubtedly have beaten the record to that port by several days.

She crossed to China in 49 days, and loaded again at Hankow at a higher rate than any of the other ships in the fleet. Leaving Woosung on the 9th June, she had as usual the unfavourable monsoon weather down the China seas, but in spite of the fact that she took 36 days to Anjer, she made a very fair passage, and took her Channel pilot 198 days out. "Hallowe'en," "Black Prince," and "Normancourt" were the only ships to make better passages, and they were late loaders which got the advantage of the favourable monsoon.

Her 1876 passage out to Australia was one of poor trades, and right to the Line she never got a chance to do 200 miles in the day.

The day of the China clipper was now very near its end. There was no longer any heart in racing. There was nothing to race about. The "Cutty" was still able to get a cargo at £4 a ton, but later loading ships were down to £2. Her last tea passage was the longest of her career—127 days.

She left London again for Sydney on the 3rd November, 1877, just in time to encounter the big gale which strewed the Goodwins and the Channel coast with wreckage. The "Cutty" put back and anchored in the Downs—it was, I believe, the only time while she was under the British flag that she was held up by stress of weather—but her cables parted and she drove helplessly into two other anchored ships in the storm and darkness. Crippled by the collisions as she was, the only thing to be done was to heave the ship to and signal for assistance, which arrived in the welcome shape of the tugboat "Macgregor," just in time to save the clipper from drifting on the dreaded Goodwins.

By the time the damage was repaired and the "Cutty" ready for sea again, nearly a month had gone by, and the "Thermopylæ," which had also been delayed by the bad weather in the Channel, had sailed a day ahead of her.

The "Thermopylæ" made a wonderful passage of 17 days from the Lizard to the Line, but the "Cutty," after crossing the Equator 5 days later, made some fine runs in the Forties, and reached Sydney in 72 days, as against the "Thermopylæ's" 74 to Melbourne.

This voyage Captain Tiptaft died in Shanghai, being succeeded by Captain Wallace, his chief mate.

For the first time the "Cutty" was unable to get a tea cargo. Only half a cargo offered in Hankow; and, after a period of heartbreaking idleness and fruitless trudging between port and port, she took a coal cargo over to Japan, and at last returned from Shanghai to Sydney in ballast.

Here she again loaded coal for China, but the quest of a tea cargo was again fruitless, and she went on in ballast to Manila, thence with jute and sugar to New York. She finished the voyage by crossing the Atlantic in 19 days—from Sandy Hook to Deal—having been hove-to for 18 hours in a cyclone.

Her next voyage was to China with Welsh coal for the American

Navy. Sailing from Penarth on the 4th June, 1880, she was delayed by heavy weather for 3 days in the Bristol Channel, and left Lundy Island astern on the 7th June.

Her sail area had been considerably cut down on her arrival in London for New York, but it seemed to make but little difference to her speed. Running down the easting, she logged on several occasions as much as $17\frac{1}{2}$ knots, her 24-hour runs frequently exceeding 350 miles; and she reached Anjer only 69 days from her point of departure.

Captain Wallace had already given ample proof of his qualities of skilful and daring seamanship. He was, indeed, an admirable man in most respects—affable, kindly, and universally liked. But he just lacked that quality of "generalship," if one may call it so, which is one of the many needed in that many-sided man, the sailing-ship captain. Every one, so we are told, has a blind spot somewhere; and it was this blind spot in poor Captain Wallace's make-up which was to lead to the only dark chapter in the "Cutty Sark's" history.

Wallace had a mate who was a bit of a "bucko," and among the crew that had been shipped at Penarth was a nigger, and a cheeky nigger into the bargain. The result of this unfortunate combination was bound to be trouble; and the trouble kept getting worse until it finished up with the mate knocking the nigger down with a capstan bar, so that he never spoke again.

At this juncture Captain Wallace lost his head badly, and did a very foolish thing in every one's interests, his own included. Had he taken the obvious course of handing the mate over to take his trial as soon as the ship reached port, the probability is that the whole thing would have blown over without much fuss. The mate had already received a good deal of provocation from the nigger, and there was considerable doubt whether the latter had not in fact been the attacker and been knocked down by the officer in self-defence—in which case a short term of imprisonment was the most the mate would have got.

As it was, he left the ship by some means while she was anchored off Anjer, almost certainly with the connivance of the captain. The crew, with the curious sentimentalism characteristic of the sailor, had all gone over to the side of the dead nigger, whom, when alive, they had heartily disliked as a poor sailorman and a rotten bad shipmate. And when

the mate was allowed to get away their feeling began to manifest itself as open mutiny. Captain Wallace, good fellow as he was, found the situation too much for his nerves, and he took the short way out of his difficulties by jumping over the stern of the "Cutty" into the shark-infested waters of the Java Sea.

The "Cutty" had thus lost two captains in less than two years. The mate was, of course, gone, and the navigation of the ship devolved upon the young second mate, who, besides being afflicted with poor sight, had not the requisite nerve to handle a clipper ship. Luckily, Captain Wallace had been at considerable pains to teach his apprentices to take sights—one wonders, in view of this fact, whether he had contemplated suicide before, and whether the Anjer tragedy only brought to a head a tendency already there. And as it turned out, the reduction in the ship's sail area was all for the best, since, had she been carrying all her racing canvas, she would have been less likely to survive all the vicissitudes of her voyage.

After many aimless wanderings from pillar to post, the "Cutty" at last arrived at Singapore with her ill-starred coal cargo—another instance of her dislike for black diamonds!

At Singapore a new captain came on board. This man, Bruce by name, had been chief officer of the "Hallowe'en." He was a fair navigator, but when you have said that you have said the best of him. If he had ever had any nerve, he had spoiled it by drinking, and he was that type of sanctimonious hypocrite who uses a show of religion as a cloak for rather more than his fair share of vices.

Under him the "Cutty" never made even a decent passage. Several of the crew left her in Sydney, and new hands had to be signed on there in their places at the high wages then prevailing in the port. Captain Bruce and his chief mate immediately set to work to "haze" these unfortunate men out of the ship. This process was one more frequently practised in American than in British ships, and consisted of making the ship so hot for the victims that they were glad to run at the first land they touched, thus forfeiting the pay due to them, which the skipper could then put into his own pocket.

From Sydney she went over to Calcutta, from Calcutta to Melbourne, and from Melbourne to Sydney again to load coal for Shanghai. Her



" CUTTY SARK " (LOOKING AFT)

passage to Shanghai was, as might be expected with such a skipper, a very poor one, and, again failing to get a tea cargo, she went on to Zebu, in the Philippines, to load for New York. To crown the misfortunes of the voyage, cholera broke out on board while she was in Shanghai, and—the captain, either through drunken stupidity or malice aforethought, having omitted to provision the ship at Saint Helena—she ran short of food on the passage to New York, and was reduced to cadging from passing shipping. At last, however, she arrived in New York on the 10th April, 1882, and Captain Bruce's ignoble reign came to an end.

A WOOL FLEET CHORUS

Fare you well, you Sydney girls, time for us to go !
The Peter's at the fore truck, and five thousand bales below,
We've a dozen shellbacks forrard, and a skipper hard as nails,
And we're bound for old England and the January sales !

Soon we'll leave the Snares behind, blusterous and strong
Up 'll come the Westerlies and hustle her along :
Running like a driven deer through the thundering gales,
Reeling under royals for the January sales !

Old Cape Stiff 'll drop astern, like a blinking dream,
Sleet and snow and crashing seas, fog and ice 'll seem,
Snoring through the Tropics with a Trade that never fails,
Nor'ard on a bowline for the January sales !

Then the girls 'll get her towrope, and she'll smell the land again,
And she'll reel the knots off steady as a blessed railway train,
Till seventy days from Sydney the Lizard light she hails—
First to the Channel for the January sales !

CHAPTER FOUR

AND now begins Phase Three in the "Cutty Sark's" existence. The unique point about her career is that she attained her greatest fame and made her best records at a time when most ships would be considered to be degenerating into old "has-beens." After they had passed their first decade the great American and Candian built clipper-ships had all seen their zenith. The early China clippers were always left behind by their newer rivals. But the "Cutty" never really found her vocation until, as ships reckon time, she was an old ship. She was not a pronounced success in the China trade, and when John Willis put her into the Australian trade her racing days were looked upon as over.

I think it is partly this quality, this capacity to "come back," which has given the little ship so great a hold on the imagination of the British public—a public notoriously indifferent as a rule to its maritime tradition: this, and the fact that she is a heavy weather ship, which has also its inevitable appeal to the popular mind. There is a fallacy among landsmen that sailors like bad weather—that they are never really happy but when the winds blow, yo-ho! and so forth. And the "Cutty," for once, really does live up to that cherished tradition. Sailors don't—nor, for the matter of that, do most ships. But the "Cutty" positively seemed to revel in a big blow.

She appeals, then, to the sporting instinct and the sentimental instinct—the two strongest impulses in this nation erroneously set down as lacking in sentiment. The Briton rather prides himself on being that abomination of the films, a hard, cold, matter-of-fact business man; just as most of us have a way of priding ourselves on our least admirable qualities. Whereas beneath his phlegmatic exterior he hides—thank Heaven!—a solid mass of slabby, treacly sentiment which shall save his soul alive.

Captain Bruce's successor was Captain E. Moore, who had been commander of Willis's "unlucky" "Blackadder," sister ship of the "Hallow-e'en." He was the right man at the right time. The "Cutty" had been badly neglected under her boozy skipper and mate, and moreover Captain Willis, no doubt believing that the ship's best days had passed away with the China tea trade, was not inclined to spend so much on her as he had done when she was kept in racing trim. Stinginess was his besetting sin, and he began to stint her in all sorts of minor details of upkeep, fond though he was of her, when she was not making such big profits as he liked.

The log of her first passage under Captain Moore is one long and melancholy record of sails split or blown out of the bolt-ropes, rigging in want of setting up, sheets carried away, and a host of such minor casualties, so that it will readily be seen that Captain Moore had not much opportunity of "cracking on" even had he been inclined to do so.

But he was a thoroughly reliable and experienced shipmaster, and under his watchful care the little clipper soon began to be her old self again.

From New York Captain Moore took her over to Samarang with oil, thence to Madras in ballast. She took in a part of her cargo there, and completed it at Bimlipatam and Coconada, where she loaded such strange and Oriental merchandise as jaggery, myrobolums and deer horns, and sailed for England. She lifted the Lizard light on the last day of May, 1883, having been away from her home port just over three years.

Her next voyage was to Newcastle, N.S.W., with general cargo, where she took in her first wool cargo for London, and surprised everyone by bringing it home in 82 days. She went out again to Newcastle in 79 days; and to crown all she shared with her old rival "Thermopylæ" the distinction of making the best wool passage of the year, arriving in the Downs 79 days out.

Captain Millett, who was in the ship at this time as an apprentice, having come to her from "The Tweed," recalls some of the incidents of the voyage, observing that "the discipline was strict, but the Captain and his officers never said a word to us so long as we did our work."

"Of course," (he continues) "with such a small crew as the 'Cutty Sark' carried we boys had to do a man's work, for which we were fully

qualified, and no difference was made either in work or treatment between ourselves and the men."

The "Cutty" now carried a ship's company of twenty or thereabouts, including the "idlers,"—that is, the carpenter, sailmaker, and so on—who had their night's rest in instead of keeping watch and watch like the rest. The apprentice of the later days of sail had, indeed, a very different time to that of his prototype of twenty years before. He might really be described as an unpaid able seaman: in many ships the apprentices did the lion's share of the work, and plenty of boys whose people had paid good premiums for them spent most of their time scouring decks and paintwork, chipping plates and tarring down, receiving no instruction whatever beyond what they could pick up in the way of seamanship from the petty officers or from senior apprentices.

"The accommodation for apprentices in the 'Cutty Sark,' " says Captain Millett, "was in a small house situated aft of the mainmast, and eight of us lived in a space of about 15 ft. by 12 ft. We were, however, very comfortable and happy except when she was taking water aboard, when it was nine chances out of ten if we escaped a ducking as we opened or shut the door. Although the 'Cutty Sark' was a ship that would stand up to be driven she was very lively in a heavy sea, and used to jerk instead of lying down easily to an extra gust of wind. Running the Easting down, she simply flew through the water, and, standing at the wheel, it was terrifying to see the huge seas rolling up after her. When she dipped her stern they looked as if they were going to swamp her, but I never saw her poop a sea. . . . She was magnificent to sail by the wind, for I have been at the wheel for two hours and never moved the spoke out of my hand, just the distance that my arm could go being sufficient to steer her by."

The night before she reached Newcastle, the fore royal stay carried away, and in consequence the royal mast broke and bent. The fore royal was taken in, and when the ship arrived in Newcastle with the royal mast several degrees out of the perpendicular she presented rather a dilapidated appearance.

The "Cutty Sark" always had a real Australian welcome in Newcastle, and her apprentices found plenty of hospitality and lots of "best girls" to walk out with.

"We loaded wool at Newcastle for London," says Captain Millett, "and presently took the tugboat to tow us outside, where we began to make sail.

A strong westerly gale was blowing, and as soon as we got the topsails set the tug had to cast off in a great hurry, as otherwise we should have been on top of her."

This performance of overrunning the tug was not uncommon with clippers. The "Thermopylæ" once did it in Sydney, and she nearly repeated the feat in Victoria when she was nearing her end.

Captain Millett continues :

"Christmas Day was spent off the Horn under very uncomfortable conditions, running before the gale with every stitch set. My job on Christmas morning was to take part in bending a new topgallant sail, and a mighty cold job it was too, the worst of it being that when one did get perished there was no fire except that in the galley, and of course that was forbidden to us. I remember that we passed a ship beating against the gale, and I have often wondered what the crew of that ship thought at seeing us with every stitch set running before it.

"We took twenty-two days to get to the Horn, which was mighty good going, and then we made for home, having an uneventful voyage to Dungeness, where we took on board our pilot. Shortly after taking the pilot aboard a tugboat came alongside, but Captain Moore refused to take him, as the captain was opening his mouth too wide. He told Captain Moore that he was very foolish, as an easterly wind was coming up; however, the breeze freshened, and we soon left the tugboat behind. In less than an hour she was out of sight astern. When passing Ramsgate we hoisted a flag, as was the custom with all Willis's ships, in order that Captain Willis, who spent much of his time there, might know we had arrived."

WHAT THE OLD MAN SAID

"Don't you take no sail off 'er,"

The Ol' Man said,
Wind an' sea rampagin'
Fit to wake the dead,—

Thrashin' through the Forties
In the sleet and 'ail,
Runnin' down the Eastin'
Under all plain sail.

"She's loggin' seventeen
An' she's liftin' to it grand,
So I'm goin' down below
For a stretch off the land.

"An' if it gits any worse, Mister,
You can come an' call me,
But—don't you take no sail off 'er,"
Said the Ol' Man,
Said 'e!

Them was the days, sonnies,
Them was the men,
Them was the ships
As we'll never see again.

Oh, but it was somethin'
Then to be alive—
Thrashin' under royals
South o' Forty-five . . .

When it was—"Don't you take no sail off 'er,"
The Ol' Man 'ud say,
Beard an' whiskers starin'
Stiff with frozen spray—

"She's loggin' seventeen,
An' she's liftin' to it grand,
An' I mean to keep 'er goin'
Under all she'll stand.

"An' if it gits any worse, Mister,
You can send an' call me,
But—don't you take no sail off 'er,"
Said the Ol' Man,
Said 'e!

CHAPTER FIVE

THE "Cutty Sark" was now fifteen years old. And at fifteen, as we have seen, most ships are long past their best. Yet here she was, in a trade for which she had never been intended, and carrying cargoes she had never been designed to carry, holding, and more than holding, her own against the big iron and composite clippers built expressly for the easting weather outward bound and the rigours of the Cape Horn homeward passage.

Captain Moore left her, after her second successful wool run, to take command of "The Tweed"; and his place as captain of the "Cutty" was taken by Captain Richard Woodget.

It was to prove a singularly happy union. Captain Woodget was just the right man for the "Cutty": and she was just the right ship for him. He had the coolness, the seamanship, the iron nerve requisite to bring out the best in such a ship as the "Cutty Sark": and she for her part was just such a staunch, trustworthy little ship as his heart desired. His long knowledge of the sea and of ships had taught him what he might reasonably ask of her. He never expected the impossible. He was an indomitable carrier of sail up to a point: but he was no reckless "cracker on," pursuing his mad course regardless of split sails and snapping spars—if indeed such a one ever really existed! Her singularly clean sheet as regards casualties aloft is sufficient proof of that.

Captain Woodget belongs to a type of shipmaster now fast becoming extinct. He learned the beginnings of his seamanship, as so many of our sailors since the days of Drake have done, in the rough, hard, exacting but incomparable school of the coasting trade of this country—that coasting trade which, with a stupidity hardly to be equalled in

the long record of Governmental stupidities, our rulers have allowed to become, since the war, practically extinct.

There are little harbours all round our coasts which have been busy, thriving places with an ancient seafaring tradition since the beginnings of our seaborne trade. Their ketches, their billyboys, their luggers, their brigs, their barges have come and gone upon their lawful—and occasionally their unlawful—occasions for centuries, precisely as the types of craft that preceded them were doing before London and Liverpool were heard of. They sent their ships against the Spaniard; they dispatched their valiant cockleshells to the Baltic, to the Mediterranean, to the Lowlands low. And they called to eager boyhood from Tyne to Thames and from Thames round to Solway to follow the sea.

And now, look where you may, it is the same sad tale. Everywhere the empty little havens lighting their pathetic little guiding lights night after night for the ships that never come. Everywhere the silted-up channels, the mouldering slips, the deserted quays and warehouses, the weathered boards whereon one may with difficulty read—as on some old board which marks a grave in a country churchyard—the scale of tolls that has held good since the Tudors reigned: everywhere what were once prosperous little seaports subsisting like beggars on the careless pence of the casual holiday-maker.

Of all this coastwise schooling, probably that of the East Coast was the hardest. The men who sailed the collier brigs, the schooners, the billyboys, were rough, unlettered, sometimes coarse and brutal, but they were splendid seamen. They knew little or nothing of scientific navigation; they groped their way along that coast of shoals and sandbanks and wicked tiderips by a sort of sense of smell peculiar to themselves. But their sailorizing knowledge was unsurpassed.

Captain Woodget is a Norfolk man. He sprang from a soil steeped as it were in salt water. He started his sea life in a billyboy belonging to Bullard, King & Co., which used to trade between Sunderland and London with glass bottles. He served in schooners, brigs, barques, scows, ships, in every sort of capacity; and visited at one time and another pretty nearly every port in the seven seas.

In 1874 he joined John Allan's "Copenhagen" as mate, and stayed in her until 1880, when he got command of Willis's old "Coldstream."



CAPT. R. WOODGET, COMMANDER OF "CUTTY SARK" (1885-1895)

He put in four years in her. She was an old frigate-built ship of Green's, nearly forty years old, and leaked abominably; and Captain Woodget had some varied experiences both grave and gay while he commanded her.

Since he left the sea, which he did shortly after the "Cutty" was sold, he has gone in for farming not very far from his birthplace. Breeding and breaking young horses was, until quite recently, among his favourite diversions, and provided him with that element of excitement dear to the heart of the clipper-ship commander. He still drives a fresh young horse with any man.

He lives as near to the tidal creek at Burnham Overy as he can without actually wetting his feet when he goes out at his door. He is still very fond of boat-sailing, and not very long ago his experience in that direction came in very useful in rather an unexpected way. He was out driving one dark night, and, the horse climbing the steep bank at the side of the road, of course the trap started to tip over. Now, as Captain Woodget pointed out, anyone not used to a boat might easily have let himself go with the trap and had a nasty smash. But, his natural impulse being to throw his weight, so to speak, towards the weather rail, he finished up standing up quite comfortably on the side of the trap, with the mainsheet (or rather the reins) still in his hand.

He is very fond of all kinds of animals—horses, dogs and cats. He used to take sable collies—then very fashionable—over to Australia in the "Cutty," and one of the first things you see when you enter his house at Burnham is the stuffed form of "Lassie," a great favourite which made several voyages with him.

He quite lives up to the tradition that a sailor ashore will ride or drive anything from a donkey to an elephant, and not long ago he started out for Wells Regatta on a "push-bike" with a tow-line attached to a motor-car. His progress through Burnham was a sight to remember as he whizzed round corners at imminent risk of his life, for the tow-line wasn't quite long enough. However, this was soon remedied, and all went well until the motor broke down a mile or two out of Wells, when the skipper cast off the tug, and finished the trip under his own sail.

The "Cutty Sark" left the Start on her first voyage under Captain Woodget on the 3rd April, 1886. After a favourable run down Channel

she met with heavy weather in the Bay, through which she came with no more serious damage than the splitting of a couple of sails. She crossed the Line 26 days out, the Cape meridian 20 days later. The trades were light throughout the passage, but it was perhaps all for the best, since it gave the new skipper a chance to get everything a-taunt-o aloft.

The "Cutty" was now in her favourite stamping ground, the kingdom of the stormy Westerlies. But as it happened, on this occasion the Westerlies for once failed her, and right through the Forties the wind held easterly with a touch of north in it.

None the less, she made some good runs, among others 931 miles in 3 days close-hauled.

It is quite a mistake to say that the "Cutty" was not a fast ship close-hauled. She revelled above everything in strong quartering breezes ; but on a bowline she frequently made over 300 miles in the 24 hours. Her weak point was in *light* winds, even before her sail plan was cut down. Why, no one can say ; but it is certain that the almost uncanny gift, which was the peculiar property of many of Steele's ships, of "ghosting" along (as the technical term puts it with singular aptness) with apparently no wind to keep them moving, was not hers.

She reached Sydney 73 days out, a very fine performance, especially in view of the poor trades and the absence of real easting weather.

The years she spent in the Australian wool trade were singularly happy ones. She was the darling and the pride of Sydney, that port of ship lovers. Sydney did not hide its shipping away and try to ignore its existence as if it were something vulgar and not to be talked about. Imagine the Londoners of the 'eighties trooping down to Poplar of a Sunday to see the shipping ! In Sydney the harbour front was the favourite promenade, and there was always plenty of hospitality going for sailormen.

The "Cutty" usually anchored in Watson's Bay or Rushcutter Bay to await the wool clip. It was during one of these waits that Captain Woodget had a rather startling experience which might be described in detective story fashion as "The Adventure of the Naked Man."

Early one morning, when the captain's steward brought him his morning coffee, he saw through the open door a naked man sitting on one of the cabin settees.

"Who is that?" asked the captain, naturally a little startled by this unusual apparition.

"I don't know, Sir," replied the steward, "I've asked him what he wants, but I can't make any sense of him at all."

Now, as it happened, there was an American ship anchored not very far from the "Cutty" with smallpox on board, and Captain Woodget at once jumped to the conclusion that the stranger had chosen this way of making his escape from the ship.

It was a disquieting idea, since it meant that the "Cutty" might be let in for a long period of quarantine if the man were allowed to stay on board: so up the skipper got in a hurry, hustled his visitor into a blanket, put him into a boat, and had him rowed ashore to the police station. He was very soon claimed by his friends, for he was a well-to-do man of unsound mind who lived in a nice house by the water. He had got away from his keeper by some means, and swum out to the "Cutty Sark," leaving his clothes on the beach.

The "Cutty" loaded her wool at Circular Quay, and sailed on the 16th October, 1885, with a ship's company of only nineteen. Rounding the Horn she met with some real Cape stiff weather. The ship broached-to while the crossjack was being furled, and the whole of the deck on the lee-side was under water. The port lifeboat and gear went over the side, the upper maintopsail was blown out of the bolt-ropes, and the main and fore topgallantsails and main royal torn to shreds.

Nine skippers out of ten would have given the order to heave the ship to. But Captain Woodget was one of those who held the view that under such conditions the boldest course was the safest. To heave to a ship like the "Cutty Sark" was indeed a very risky process, as she was so heavily sparred that there was great danger of dismasting her when she came up into the wind, whereas with her powerful stern she could keep going before the biggest seas that ever ran.

Accordingly, a new main upper topsail was bent, reefed and set, and the following day, the gale showing signs of abating, a new main topgallantsail and royal were also set. Another gale came away on the 8th November, but beyond shipping it green the ship was none the worse, and she rounded the Horn 23 days from Sydney.

From the Horn to the Line she was 20 days, which I believe constitutes

an unbroken record for a sailing-ship. Her best run—302 miles—was made in a north-westerly gale.

She passed the Western Islands close-hauled in a blow from the north, and arrived in the Downs just before midnight on the 28th December.

The "Cutty Sark" was now to revisit once again the China Seas, the scene of her early voyages. Captain Willis still cherished phantom hopes of beating the record in the tea trade, so he sent her out to Shanghai in 1886 with a cargo of scrap-iron on the chance of picking up a tea charter.

At midnight, on the 19th February, the "Cutty" took her departure from the Start, and for once the "dead horse" was up before she reached the Line. In the Forties, however, she made several runs of over 300 miles, a remarkable speed considering the fact that she was drawing over 21 feet with her scrap-iron. She reached Shanghai 124 days out. The weather had been far from favourable, both north-east and south-east. trades being very poor, and she was further handicapped by her cargo. The "Cutty" was built for cargoes like tea, and when she carried them her powerful stern did not affect her speed much, as it undoubtedly did when she was at all low in the water. Captain Woodget himself considers that she would have been good for another knot had she been a shade lighter aft.

While he was in Shanghai this voyage some one presented the skipper with a bicycle. It was one of those real old "boneshakers" with wooden spokes and the pedals fixed on to the front wheel, and he learned to ride it on the way over to Sydney. The scene of his experiments was the 'tween-decks, and by the time the ship reached port he could ride the whole way round. Naturally the movement of the ship made first efforts in the art of cycling a decidedly ticklish business, and once the bicycle took a dive through the hatch on to the ballast, the skipper just managing to save himself by hanging on to a stanchion.

Another of his amusements about this time was roller-skating, and many a time did his head make the close acquaintance of the "Cutty's" teak deck. Once he induced Selby, the mate, to put on a pair of rollers, with the result that after a few frantic gyrations he came down a frightful thump on his head with his feet waving in the air, and nothing would induce him to try roller-skating again.



" CUTTY SARK " (LOOKING FORWARD)

It was probably his partiality to these various forms of exercise and to his hobbies such as photography which kept him so fit and well. The life of a sailing-ship captain—especially in a clipper—was one which entailed a good deal of strain both physical and mental, and very often the lack of exercise had the effect of making the Old Man's liver far from active, with dire results to his nerves and temper.

Alas for Captain John Willis's hopes! The blue riband of the China trade was not for him, for the simple reason that there was no blue riband left to win. The last nail had been driven into the coffin of the China clipper, and after spending between three and four months in Shanghai the "Cutty" spread her wings once more for Sydney. Only two sailing-ships loaded tea this season—"Hallowe'en," and "Leander," the former being lost near Salcombe on the homeward passage.

The "Cutty" left Shanghai on the 5th October, and between there and Woosung went aground on a sandbank, where she made a comfortable bed for herself in the sand. The tugboat man was smacking his lips over the prospect of a nice little job of salvage, and adopted a "cannny" method of getting her off. However, as soon as the tide shifted the sand from her keel she came off without the slightest difficulty, greatly to the tug skipper's disgust.

On the way down to Anjer the ship ran 78 miles in five hours with her main royal set in a strong north-easterly wind, and a little later a sudden fierce shift of wind stripped all the sail off her and put her on her beam ends with her mainyard arm dipping under and her hatch-coamings awash on the lee-side.

She passed Anjer twenty-six days from Shanghai—her last run down the China Sea. Running down the easting to Australia she made 342 miles in $23\frac{1}{2}$ hours: the half-hour allows for the difference in time going from west to east.

The fruitless delay at Shanghai had put her out of the running for a wool cargo before March; she left Sydney on the 26th of that month, and had a very rough homeward passage.

"Very hard south gale and terrific squalls, blowing foretopsail clean out of the rope"—"wind with mountainous sea" are characteristic entries in the log between Auckland Island and the Horn. Later she ran among a crowd of icebergs. "Passed eight icebergs during the

night"—runs one terse note: eloquent enough without further comment. The weather continued rough and stormy for a fortnight after the Horn was left behind. "Sea one white foam," says Captain Woodget, writing on the 28th April, and one of the apprentices had a narrow escape of being washed overboard.

Just off the Western Islands she was near being dismasted through being caught aback in a sudden squall, and had she been carrying her storm sails she might have lost her number. Luckily, however, her canvas was a fine-weather suit, so it promptly reduced itself by the simple process of vanishing into space.

By way of a change from her usual January run up Channel, in sleet and snow, the "Cutty" enjoyed the glorious June weather, the blue days and golden nights of the Jubilee year, and took her pilot off Dungeness 72 days out, after the best passage of the season.

About this time Captain Woodget took up a fresh hobby, namely, photography, and some of his old apprentices have poignant recollections of hair-raising moments when he took the ship under full sail from one of the boats. It was their business to steady the camera legs, and if they let them wobble at a critical moment—well, the less said perhaps the better!

SEA SORROW

“Didn’t you sail with Billy Riley las’ v’yage—
 Bloke I used to know
In the port watch o’ the old ‘Eliza Masters’?”
 Ay, I did so.

“An’ could you tell me any pub where I’d be likely
 To cross ’is hawse ashore?” . . .
You needn’t look in no pub for Billy Riley,
 ’Cos he won’t come back no more.

“Why, ’as ’e gone up to the South Seas then
 An’ lef’ the sea for good,
An’ set up ’ouse with a fuzzy-’eaded gal there,
 Same’s ’e always said ’e would?”

’E ain’t set up ’ouse with no gal, ain’t Billy,
 Not as I knows on . . .
For there ain’t no ’ouses nor there ain’t no gals neither
 In the place where Bill’s gone.

There was a head-wind an’ a cross sea runnin’,
 An’ the day bright an’ fine,
An’ it breezed up so’s we ’ad to get the ’ead-sails off ’er,
 ’Alf-way up from the Line.

An’ Bill laid out on the boom with another feller,
 Makin’ fast the jib down-haul,
An’ they didn’t git done an’ come back same’s they would ’ave
 If they’d any sense at all.

But there they stopped to watch ’er stoopin’, swayin’,
 I can jus’ fancy ’ow,
All ’er pile o’ canvas shinin’, swellin’,
 An’ the bubbles streamin’ off ’er bow.

An’ the feller at the wheel ’e was a sodger
 As warn’t fit to drive an ’earse,
For ’e brought ’er up into the wind suddent,
 ’Cos ’e couldn’t steer a curse.

So’s the old gal took an’ shoved ’er boom under,
 Which she never done afore . . .
An’ that’s why I’m tellin’ you as Billy Riley
 Ain’t comin’ back no more. . . .

CHAPTER SIX

THE "Cutty" was away to sea again on the 17th August, and while running her easting down had the bad luck to be dismasted, owing to her mate, who was an old man and none too quick in the "up-take," letting her run up into the wind when she was struck by a sudden squall. She lost her fore and main topgallant masts and maintopmast, but she still kept going while new spars were being fitted, and even under her jury rig she made runs of over 500 miles.

This mate, Dimint, was a hawse-pipe officer, and a bit of a character. One of his peculiarities was that he was a tremendously heavy sleeper. He used to snore like a hippopotamus, and like all snorers could never be got to believe it. Once Captain Woodget took a photograph of him with his mouth wide open and the snores evidently in full blast, but he still declined to be convinced.

She arrived in Newcastle 89 days out. It was one of her longest passages in the wool trade, but she more than made up for it on the run home.

She made a very southerly course to the Horn, even for her, and Captain Woodget was always fond of the high latitudes. In 62° south four icebergs were sighted, which proved to be the outposts of a big army of them. For a fortnight afterwards the ship was among the ice the whole time, sometimes as many as 87 bergs large and small being in sight at once.

When the ship was passing through ice, Captain Woodget used to lean on the spanker boom with his chin on his folded arms, and watch the bergs, and many a time he found himself stuck fast to the boom by the beard when the time came to move.

Another favourite diversion of his was a novel form of sea hopscotch—namely, trying to smash up some of the small ice, or "growlers,"

with the "Cutty's" bow, but they always dodged away on one side or the other.

Favourable winds brought the ship to the Channel from the Western Islands in 4 days, and she took her pilot off Dungeness on the 8th March, only 70 days from Newcastle.

She left again on the 18th May, and arrived in Sydney 77 days out, after a good but uneventful passage.

Her next homeward run was marked by one of the few fatalities of her career. She had less than her usual allowance of ballast, and in consequence proved more cranky than usual, so that Captain Woodget had for once to refrain from hanging on to his royals in the high south latitudes, and even so the decks were constantly full of water washing right over the hatches.

The victim was an apprentice who was making his first voyage in the "Cutty," having come to her from Willis's "Dharwar." He was a promising youngster, possessing the makings of a good seaman. The tragedy happened—as so many similar tragedies have happened in the history of sail—while the men were hauling on the lee braces in the flooded waist, in the early hours of a dark stormy morning. A sea struck the ship and made her heel over till her lee-rail lay under. The men on the brace jumped for it, all but one—the apprentice. He lost his head and, clinging to the end of the brace, was swept over the side. Captain Woodget saw him still holding on to the rope, and cried out to him to hang on. But it was too late. The rope slipped from his grasp, and he was seen no more.

After the ship had passed the Snares the wind fell light, and although Captain Woodget went as far south as 64 degrees he found no strong winds to give him a good run up to the Horn. The sea was flat calm, a most unusual state of affairs in this kingdom of the westerlies, and all kinds of seabirds, mostly penguins and blackcaps, were seen swimming close to the ship. As a result of this unnaturally calm weather, the "Cutty" took 36 days from Sydney to the Horn.

She made very good time for the rest of the passage, and docked on the 20th January, 1889, 86 days from Sydney. For once hers was not the best passage, "Loch Vennachar" beating her by two days and "Salamis" by one.

She sailed again on the 4th May, and her outward passage was marked by one of the most famous incidents of her career, when she overhauled and passed the P. & O. mail steamer "Britannia."

Down the Channel she had very light winds, and I think it must have been on this occasion that she put in close to Falmouth to land her pilot. The north-east trades were poor and very soon left her, and she had to wait for easting weather before she had a chance to stretch herself.

She was rounding Gabo Island in the early afternoon of the 25th July, when the "Britannia," with mails for Sydney, passed her so close that the passengers could clearly be seen lined up along the steamer's rail to see the famous clipper.

"If the wind would freshen up a bit," remarked Captain Woodget, "we would give those passengers something to look at!"

A little later it did breeze up from southerly, and the "Cutty" went away at a seventeen-knot clip.

During the night the second officer of the "Britannia" roused his captain and announced "Sailing-ship coming up fast astern, sir."

"Nonsense, man!" retorted the irate skipper. "You're dreaming!"

However, he came on deck to see for himself, and there was no denying the evidence of his own eyes, so down it went in the log. But as yet they had no idea that the mysterious ship was the "Cutty Sark," which the "Britannia" had last sighted dropping astern off Gabo Island.

The mail-boat captain mentioned having spoken the "Cutty Sark" when the pilot came on board.

"There she is!" said the pilot, indicating the little clipper comfortably moored in Watson's Bay.

On the way up the main royal carried away, and a boy was immediately sent aloft to bend another sail, although the ship was only a few hours from port.

On the homeward run the "Cutty" met a worthy opponent in Devitt & Moore's well-known passenger clipper "Rodney." Leaving Sydney on the 2nd November, she again had a poor run to the Horn. A good deal of ice was sighted, and for a time the ship was running with flooded decks before a furious north-westerly gale at a speed of 336 miles in 24 hours.

Off the Horn she spoke the "Rodney," which had left Sydney two days before her, and for some time the two ships kept together. "All day in company," runs the entry in the log, "could not get ahead of her; when the wind freshened we came up, when light she goes ahead." The next day the log states, "Ship 'Rodney' about four miles to leeward, about two points before the beam"; and later, "'Rodney' almost abreast of us," and "'Rodney' on the quarter."

On the 3rd December the two ships again lost sight of each other, only to forgather once again in the doldrums at the end of the month. Then the "Cutty" picked up the north-east trades and finally gave the "Rodney" the dust of the road. She reached London 75 days from Sydney, the "Rodney" arriving on the same day, 78 days out. Nicol's little "Cimba," another of the "Cutty's" great rivals, also made a fine passage of 75 days.

The "Cutty's" next outward passage was also of 75 days. Running down the easting, she made several runs of over 300 miles, and on one occasion topped 340.

This was the year of the big strike in the Australian coasting trade, and while the ship was in Sydney two of her apprentices, lured by the high wages offered to "blacklegs," ran the ship and made a coasting voyage. When the coaster came into port again, Captain Woodget claimed the runaways, who went along with him as quietly as lambs. However, the captain wasn't going to give them the chance of running loose again, so he took the precaution of having them put under lock and key until the ship sailed. The wages due to them from the coaster were duly impounded, and when the "Cutty" arrived in London Captain Woodget handed the money over in due course to old Willis, thinking he would give it back to the boys with a few words of admonition. Instead of that he put it in his pocket, and chuckled over it for days.

The strike, of course, delayed the loading of the wool fleet. The "Cutty" again sailed late, and met with the bad weather usual at that time of the year between Australia and the Horn, head-winds, fog, and lots of ice. For the rest of the way light airs alternated with head-winds, and the "Cutty" docked on the 16th March, 92 days out.

The outstanding incident of her 1891 passage to Sydney was a tre-

mendous sea which she encountered on the 28th June, while running down her easting in 45° south latitude.

The day had begun with a "hard gale and terrific squalls," accompanied by hail and a very high sea, and at five in the afternoon a vast sea rolled up right aft. It towered up above the ship so high that the second mate, who was working at some job with the carpenter outside the midshiphouse, saw its white tossing mane of foam right over the crojick yard. Captain Woodget also saw it, and for once he thought the ship could not live. He turned his back on the advancing mass of water and waited for the end. But the "Cutty's" time was not yet.

"Who-o-osh"—the little ship ran down the steep slope of water as if she had been a toboggan. If the sea had broken over her poop as it threatened to do, nothing could have saved her. But for once Captain John was justified in his preference for a powerful stern. The sea stood up for a matter of seconds like a green wall on each side of the ship as she hung at the top of the crest with both her bow and stern out of the water. Then it crashed down on the maindeck and filled it up till nothing could be seen but a turmoil of foam and the boats and masts. The midshiphouse, where the second mate and the carpenter had taken refuge, was completely submerged, and the occupants, seeing nothing but green water through the portholes, expected nothing better than to be drowned like trapped rats.

Then as her bow rose the sea poured out aft, smashing in the doors of the saloon and nearly washing away the skipper and the two men at the wheel, whose lashings were all that saved them.

The closing incident of the voyage was a race with the mail-boat from Melbourne to Sydney. The "Ballarat" left Melbourne 24 hours after the "Cutty," but she maintained her lead and got in just 24 hours ahead of the steamer.

Her next passage to the Horn was by the north of New Zealand, owing to persistent southerly winds. She rounded "old Stiff" on the 3rd December, 28 days out. The only important incidents of the voyage were that on two occasions she lost her foretopgallant mast. The weather throughout was very unfavourable for making a passage, but she arrived in London only 85 days from Sydney. The "Salamis," of the Aberdeen White Star Line, made the best run home of the season, but her passage



CAPT. WOODGET IN THE CABIN OF THE " CUTTY SARK " (1924)

is no better than the "Cutty's," taking into consideration the difference between her port, Geelong, and Sydney.

The "Cutty" now once more loaded general cargo for Newcastle, and—leaving the Lizard on the 16th August—reached that port on the 7th November, 83 days out. The passage was mostly one of light winds, with some good runs in the easting weather of 324, 312, and 310 days.

The steamers were now driving the clippers out of the wool trade as they had already driven them out of the tea and the passenger trades. This year, for the first time, the "Cutty Sark" did not load wool for London.

She sailed for Antwerp on the 7th January, 1893. In 59° south latitude she fell in with the extensive icefield mention of which occurs in all the homeward-bounders' logs that year. The first mention of the ice in Captain Woodget's log is on the 23rd January, and from that date until the 9th February she was among ice practically all the time.

"During the day (25th January)"—thus the log—"there has been a constant line of icebergs on both sides, as many as thirty in sight at one time." Again, on the 26th January: "Numbers of icebergs on both sides, sea striking the weather sides of bergs 250 or 300 feet high, and sprays of sea and foam going up far above the top of the ice. Some of the bergs had holes underneath and the sea spouting up on the lee side in immense columns. One berg, passed to-day, was all streaked with what appeared to be earth. I counted thirty lines about one foot thick of earth, then one of ice, and so on right through the ice."

Yet under these conditions, and in weather which added to the peril of the ice that of fog, the ship covered a distance of 200 miles. The following day she made a run of 340 miles, the ice danger being considerably less.

No weather condition ever devised is so cordially detested by the seaman as fog. It blinds him, it deadens his hearing, and even his sense of smell is crippled, since you can only smell ice to windward. His ship's very swiftness becomes an added source of peril. And if to all this be added either the presence of unseen shipping in a crowded fairway, or that of ice in the waters of the South or the North Atlantic, his misery is complete. Ice is the worse of the two: for ships, at all events, do

their best to avoid collisions, despite that strange propensity they seem to have for blundering into one another in thick weather with the whole ocean for sea-room. One can conceive no worse doom for sinful master mariners than to be compelled to sail for ever among ice over a fogbound sea, especially in the high latitudes below Cape Horn, where the eerie and almost human wail of the penguins announces the dreaded proximity of the unseen danger, and there is heard at intervals the long-drawn melancholy note of the cowhorn which the shivering lookout sounds ever and anon, listening between each mournful blast for the answering reverberation which shall give warning of the drifting death.

On the 8th February, three days after rounding the Horn, the day, which had opened foggy with a light breeze from the south-west, cleared and showed the sea again crowded with bergs.

"Found ice ahead," says the log; "in fact, there was ice all round—as soon as we cleared one berg another would be reported on either side. You could hear the sea roaring on them and through them, the ice cracking sometimes like thunder, at other times like cannon, and often like a sharp rifle report, and yet could not see them.

"At 1 p.m. the top of an iceberg was seen, which one could hardly believe was ice, it looked like a streak of dark cloud. Then we could see the ice a few feet down, but we could not see the bottom. It was up at an angle of 45 degrees, we were only about 1,000 feet off, so it would be 1,000 feet high. It had a circular top, but we could not see the ends.

"A few minutes later another was under the bows, we only cleared it by a few feet. It was about 100 feet high and flat-topped. Just as we were passing the corner there was a sharp report that made you jump, as if it was breaking in two.

"Found another on the other side quite close, and a few minutes later saw the long ridge of ice almost ahead. Kept off, and then another came in sight on the other bow. We were too near it to keep away, but I felt sure it was no part of the big one—as we were passing this the point of the big one came in sight, the fog cleared and we passed in between them, there being not more than 400 feet between them.

"When we had cleared the big one I saw its north end and took bearings. After sailing eight miles I took other bearings and found that the east side was nineteen miles long, and we could not see the end of the side we sailed along. We sailed about six miles alongside of it, water now quite smooth. Before noon the water was quite lumpy from all ways. After we had cleared the passage by about three or four miles, it cleared up astern, and what a sight

it was! Nothing but icebergs through the passage and on the south side of the passage (for the south berg was only about half a mile long north to south, same height as the big berg: I expect it had not long broken off). There was nothing but a sea of ice astern, and another large flat-topped iceberg, which as far as you could see extended like land. It must have been twenty miles long or more.

"After we were through there was nothing but small ice, from small pieces to bergs 100 feet long. There was also one about a mile long covered with what looked like pumice-stone or lumps of tallow. I did not see it till it was abeam or I should have gone close to it; there was ice on either side of it. Ice now cleared."

The usual summer loosening-up of the Antarctic ice is hardly sufficient to account for the presence of so many bergs so far north as 50° south, and Captain Woodget's description of some of the icebergs he saw, especially those covered with pumice-stone and earth, would seem to suggest that some mighty volcanic upheaval on the great frozen continent had broken off large masses from the Polar ice-cap.

The only other important occurrence of the voyage was the loss of two men who were washed off the jibboom through the helmsman, an inexperienced hand who had been shipped among a very scratch collection at Sydney, bringing the ship up into the wind suddenly after he had let her fall away from her course.

Sailors like to get out along the jibboom and watch the ship. It is a very favourite vantage-point whence to see the play of the sun and shadow over the rounded surfaces of the piled-up sails, and see the leap and quiver of the hull as the ship strides over the waves and breaks them into a million bubbles under her dripping forefoot. These two poor fellows did it once too often. They had gone out to make fast the jib downhaul, the outer jib having been taken in as the wind freshened, and the ship, while they lingered, took a sudden plunge, owing to the bad steering of the man at the wheel, and put her boom under.

The men could not swim. Even had they been able to do so, there was too much sea to lower a boat. The captain wore ship and stood off and on for a time to see if anything could be done. But it was no use.

The "Cutty" made Antwerp on the 15th April, 98 days out, and left again on the 1st August, on what was to prove her last voyage to Sydney. As by some mysterious law of compensation so often seemed to happen

in the case of the old clipper ships, this last voyage included some of the best records of the "Cutty's" long life. On the 27th, 28th and 29th September, her day's run exceeded in each case 300 miles, and on the 29th she ran 350 miles in the 24 hours. During these three days a good deal of ice was sighted, probably the remnants of the great icefield encountered on the last homeward passage. On the 15th October she made the biggest run—353 miles—she had made since Captain Woodget commanded her.

One has heard the phrase "faster than the wind" used in a metaphorical sense. But that, as a matter of fact, was often the case with the "Cutty." She literally outsailed her wind. In strong wholesail breezes nothing could hold her, and she romped along so that she ran out of the wind when a slower vessel would have kept it with her much longer.

She arrived in Sydney 80 days from Antwerp, and loaded for Hull, bidding her last farewell to Sydney on Christmas Eve, 1893.

The homeward passage was a fairly long one. It was the wrong season for a good N.E. trade, and she did not reach the Channel till the 87th day.

She made yet one more Australian voyage, this time to Brisbane, which she reached 79 days out.

The little clipper had seen her best days. Her copper was ragged, and the reduction in profits had made her owner starve her in upkeep.

But she could sail still. It was as if she made her last mute protest against the ingratitude and infidelity of those she had served so long and so well.

On the homeward passage from Brisbane, ship after ship was spoken and passed astern—"Pass of Killiecrankie," "Knight of St. Michael's," "California," "Earl of Dalhousie," are among them. She docked on the 26th March, 86 days from Brisbane, and Captain Willis sold her to the Portuguese shortly after her arrival.

Thereafter her story is a sad little Odyssey of unfamiliar ports and strange cargoes, of neglect and grime and buffetings by wind and sea. Escaping as by a miracle the risks of war, she was nearly lost in a hurricane a few days out from Delagoa Bay, and reappeared, after refitting, rigged as a barquentine. Her original Portuguese purchasers sold her again in 1919, and she sank still lower in the scale of fortune.



THE " CUTTY SARK " IN THE SURREY DOCKS

I saw her in Surrey Docks in November, 1921, and, like every one else with a heart for a fair ship fallen on evil days, felt the mute appeal of her wistful and neglected beauty.

But better days were in store. Chance took her into Falmouth, as a result of a battering in the Channel, and there Captain Dowman, a retired sailing-ship skipper living at Flushing, happened to see her and—further encouraged, so I believe, by his wife, like him a lover of ships—bought her back for the Red Ensign.

THE "CUTTY" COMES BACK

*What says the Lizard,
Swinging high his shining spear? . . .
"Pass along, my lady,
I've known ye many a year!"*

Ay, many a time he's seen her,
All splendid from the sea,
Come swaying up from south'ard
With chests of China tea,
Or, loaded to her hatches
With Riverina bales,
Lead home the racing wool fleet
Rip-roaring for the sales!

*What says the wind's song
That lifts her on her way?
"Blow along, my sweetheart,
I've known ye many a day!"*

Ay, many a day he's known her,
The salty Channel breeze,
And all his gusty brethren
That range the ridged seas,
But most of all the west winds
Whose stormy marches roll
A bleak and bitter kingdom—
The Forties to the Pole . . .

THE RETURN OF THE "CUTTY SARK"

The winds that drove the clippers
Like flying deer along,
The winds that break the weakling,
The winds that prove the strong!

*What says old Atlantic
That crusts her bows with brine?
"Roll along, my beauty,
For you're a friend o' mine!"*

Ay, well old ocean knows her,
And well she knows him too,
His charging Biscay rollers,
His sunwarmed Tropic blue,
Both deep and shoal she knows him,
She knows him storm and shine,
Lashed white when typhoon rages,
Flat calm athwart the Line,
The swell that lifts the ice-pack
In fogbound seas forlorn,
The long Agulhas combers
And greybeards of the Horn.

CHAPTER SEVEN

IT was my great pleasure and privilege to accompany the famous clipper on her first trip to sea after her reconditioning and return to her old name and flag.

It was but a short cruise, it is true—without canvas and with the hawsers of a couple of Falmouth tugs on board. But even so, it was a memorable experience in more ways than one. It was a day of so many notable associations revived, of so many incidents which recalled (however faintly) the stirring days of the great little ship's long and valiant past.

There could be no more perfect setting for a sailing ship than Falmouth Harbour. Many are the beautiful ships it has seen in its time, when it was the great port "for orders" for the 'Frisco grain fleet; none more beautiful, and assuredly none more famous, than the little clipper. She made a lovely picture, with the green slopes of Trefusis for a background, the old "Foudroyant" at her moorings hard by, and the harbour filled with its gay little fleet of yachts and pleasure-boats and the Falmouth quay punts so well known to a bygone generation of sailormen, when they used to go out to sea twenty or thirty miles to meet the homeward-bound; here and there, too, a coasting barquentine or topsail schooner, and out in the Roads a big American fore-and-after which would, no doubt, make two or three of the "Cutty" as regards carrying capacity. But what a contrast she was, with her four stumpy pole-masts and the jumper stay running from end to end of her like a telegraph-wire, to the clipper's soaring masts and tapering spars, culminating in the little skysail yard at the main, which she had never crossed since the eighteen-eighties came in.

The point which always strikes one about the "Cutty" is her look of gull-like grace and buoyancy, even when she is at anchor or tied up to a wharf. It did not desert her when she lay a captive in the Surrey Docks. Her immobility is not death, but suspended animation. She

never looks "dead," as most steamers and a good many modern sailing vessels do under similar conditions. She lies on the water like a resting swan, ready at a sign to quiver into lovely life and movement.

She has undergone a wonderful transformation since she was in London three years ago. Gone are the incongruous rows of sham ports which did their best to conceal the gracious curves of her hull. Gone is the gaudy paint from her figurehead: and, by the way, the modelling of the outstretched arm (which replaces the original one lost at sea some years ago) is so vastly inferior to the rest of the figure that it is to be hoped it may one day be restored in better keeping with the whole. Her hull reproduces very nearly the colours she showed on the day of her launch; and, with the houseflag of old John Willis's fleet fluttering at the main, she looks ready, aye, and willing, to make a start for Sydney any day you please.

Will that day ever come? Who shall say? A good deal still remains to be done if, and before, it does. Her old Portuguese gear has not (1924) all been renewed, which fact received practical demonstration on the way round to Fowey, when the word was given to "haul taut the port royal brace," and the zealous volunteer crew tailed on to the rope so lustily that, as the lodging-house slavey would put it, it "come away in me 'and!" In the old days there would have been something more than mere blocks flying loose. You could almost hear the old ship holding her breath as she waited for the resultant language.

There are rumours that she is to be fitted with canvas, to sail up to the Clyde next year. If so, may her white wings also bear her once more to London River! She would have a royal welcome there, in the great port of the wool and tea ships—a welcome only to be exceeded, perhaps, should she, indeed, run down the easting yet again to Sydney, her second home.

It was nine o'clock on the morning of Sunday, the 3rd August, when the Falmouth tugs "Durgan" and "Perran" came alongside, and once more the tramp of feet round the capstan, and the familiar click of the windlass pawls, heralded the appearance of the dripping wooden-stocked anchor with its muddy flukes—that same old anchor which has been shantied up so often from the harbours of the world, in the vanished days when those harbours were still lovely with lovely ships, and the ships and men were young that are old men and old ships to-day.



FIGUREHEAD OF " CUTTY SARK " (1924)

And now a boat pulled out from the quay and a sturdy, white-bearded man climbed the ladder and stepped on board.

It was Captain Woodget, the "Cutty's" most famous skipper, come back from the Norfolk farm of his long retirement to take charge—though but for a few short hours—of the ship which he left twenty-eight years ago.

There are many kinds of love in a man's life. There is the love of a woman, there is the love of children, there is the love of house and land, there is the love of country. And to the sailor, there is the special kind of love which he feels for one ship above all the rest he has known and served. That love Captain Woodget had for the "Cutty." Who shall say that in her dumb being she did not know it? For this was one of the cases—far from rare, indeed, among ships—when there seemed to be a strange, a mysterious sympathy and affinity between a human being and a fabric of metal and wood and hemp. There have been ships which have drowned themselves after parting with a captain who had loved them, as faithful dogs have died on their masters' graves. There have been ships which one man, and one alone, could do any good with, just as there are horses which one man and no other can ride. And after all, what is man but one form of matter, and a ship but another? . . . But I am drifting dangerously near the rocks and shoals of unorthodox doctrine, so it is time to go about and get on to a safer tack.

Certain it is that the "Cutty" never sailed so well for any man as she did for Captain Woodget. He "made" her; and that, be it remembered, at a time when her spars and sail area had already been very considerably reduced.

It was a wonderful meeting, that of the skipper with his old ship; one which nobody, I think, could witness without emotion. A quarter of a century and more is a big lump out of a man's life, perhaps especially so in such a case as this. It has been long enough to see proud fleets of swift and beautiful ships swept clean off the seas like morning mist. It has written "Finis" to a chapter of the story of human achievement which reached far back into the dawn of history: an unbroken record of endurance and adventure, of skill and daring and the inherited lore of the sea. It has been long enough to see life's dawn become its noon-day, and the prime of manhood mellow into age.

Sad, that youth should pass, that fair ships should decay? Well, perhaps—and yet . . . I don't know . . . what is youth, after all, but a relative term? We can't measure it by mere years. A man may keep his soul of youth at fourscore, or he may have lost it for good at twenty. So long as we have our enthusiasms, our ideals, our loves, so long also we have our youth, in spite of baldness and greyness and wrinkles and creaky joints. I think sailormen often have this quality of youngness in middle life and old age. Perhaps it is owing partly to a life of constant change. They keep starting afresh, and so lose the consciousness of the long road they have travelled. Perhaps, too, it is because they live near to the heart of things. One finds the same quality sometimes—though more seldom—in old countrymen, old shepherds: the eyes of youth, hopeful, eager, alert, looking out from amid the crow's-feet of age. And as among men, so also among ships. There are some, and the little "Cutty" is one of them, which seem to hold the secret of a perpetual spring. The years pass, the ships pass, but they remain—surviving the long buffetings of time and the sea, the ill-usage, the avarice, and the neglect of man, with an endurance which has about it a quality almost unearthly.

The skipper took the helm—a very unusual occurrence in the ship's history, since, except in heavy weather, when he might lend a hand at the lee wheel, he very seldom touched the spokes in the old days. The familiar "Let go" rang out from the poop. "Let go," came the answering shout from the forecastle head. Round she came and headed for the sea, dipping her ensign as she passed to St. Anthony's in answer to the salutation from the lighthouse.

Curiously enough, I believe the "Cutty" was never in Falmouth Harbour during her palmy days. Being in a regular trade—tea first and wool later—she had no need to call for orders, and since she always managed to keep going along whatever conditions in the Channel might be, she never put into Carrick Roads for shelter from the weather. The nearest she ever came to it in Captain Woodget's time was on one occasion, when she had been delayed by head-winds in the Channel, and came in almost as far as Black Rock to land her pilot.

But once clear of the harbour, she was in familiar waters. Yonder

to westward lay the Lizard, the point of so many departures on the long run "down under," the scene of so many victorious and triumphant landfalls. Many and many a time she has glimpsed it through the rain and mist and flying spray, homeward bound for the January wool sales; many and many a time waved it her last farewell as she dipped down under the notched edge of the tossing world of waters.

Captain Woodget had now relinquished the wheel to Captain Millett, another of the old ship's enthusiastic admirers, whose connection with the "Cutty," although he is much the junior in point of age, dates back even further than the old skipper's. He was one of "them damn boys" in the days of Captain Moore—the second of that name. And the feel of those old wheel-spokes brought many a memory in its train; among them, that of the clipper in the south-east trades bowling along close-hauled with everything set, almost steering herself, but for a touch now and then on the spokes, and the skipper pausing in his fore-and-aft pacing of the poop to say:

"My boy, this ship is making thirteen-and-a-quarter knots full and by. Mark what I say, for you will never see another ship do the same."

She slipped leisurely along the coast, in the wake of her tugs, at about five or six knots, and it was wonderful to note how easily she went through the water, with as little noise and fuss as a fish. It gave one some idea of the secret of her great speed, which there can be no doubt depended—as in the case of most of the crack clippers—as much on the lines of her hull as on her sail-plan. But ah, how it made one long to see her under sail!

The cruise drew to an end all too soon. The fair promise of the morning had given place to mist and driving rain, blotting out all but the nearest headlands, and stooping low over the land as the ship neared Fowey Harbour.

Out came a motor-boat flying the red-and-white, and an oilskinned and seabooted pilot ran up the side.

"Pleased to meet ye, Cap'n!"

And, just for a moment, the past was the present, the present the past. She was taking her pilot once again with the long weeks and

months of the voyage behind her . . . the thundering westerlies, the stormy Horn, the smell of the Antarctic ice . . . the golden tropic days, the star-sown tropic nights . . . eighty days from Sydney Heads, first home of the racing wool fleet. . . .

